

**Opening Statement**  
**Ranking Member Raul Grijalva**  
**Recreation Access**  
**May 7, 2013**

Thank you, Chairman Bishop, for holding this hearing today. I think this is a critical issue – and one that deserves more attention. Thank you also to those of you who are testifying. For many of you, testifying today means you aren't home running your businesses so we appreciate the sacrifice you made to come to D.C.

Recreation and the money recreation generates from our public lands is important. Too often, we fight over oil and gas development, logging, and mining when the real economic engine fueling many communities is the recreation economy.

The Outdoor Industry Association estimates that outdoor recreation creates \$646 billion in direct consumer spending and \$80 billion in federal, state, and local taxes. This is bigger than the pharmaceutical or automobile industry. In my home state of Arizona, outdoor recreation is a \$10 billion industry that supports \$3.5 billion in wages and salaries.

The importance of the industry is why I introduced legislation to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Great Outdoors Commission. This legislation is modeled after the bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission that was enacted in the Eisenhower Administration.

When enacted, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Great Outdoors Commission will be charged with making policy recommendation to Congress on how to promote and protect this valuable activity. As everyone testifying today says in one way or another, we need to re-look at how people in America are using these resources and what can be done to make sure the federal government is meeting the needs of taxpayers. And by the way – no federal money would be spent on this Commission.

My legislation has the support of the Outdoor Industry Association, the National Wildlife Federal, the Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy, the Outdoor Alliance, and the National Parks Conservation Association.

Again, I want to thank the Chairman for holding this important hearing and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.